

CITY OF SAN DIEGO
M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: March 21, 2002

TO: Distribution

FROM: Holly Cheong, City of San Diego Planning Department, MSCP

SUBJECT: Public Review Draft for Carmel Mountain and Del Mar Mesa Management Plan

Attached is the public review draft for the Carmel Mountain and Del Mar Mesa Preserve Management Plan. The purpose of this plan is to establish guidelines for maintenance and public use of the open space on Carmel Mountain and Del Mar Mesa in order to protect the unique natural and cultural resources on-site. Please review the attached document and provide written comments by April 15, 2002. A subsequent meeting will be set up to discuss the comments submitted.

During the public review process, additional vernal pools and dudleya were discovered in the southeast corner of the Carmel Mountain Preserve. An additional access point has also been proposed in the southern portion of the preserve west of the future park site. Figure 5-1d has been revised in the attached document to reflect the new information and proposed access point.

Any comments can be e-mailed to hcheong@sandiego.gov, faxed to 619-236-6478, or mailed to Holly Cheong, City of San Diego Planning Department, 202 C Street, MS 5A, San Diego, CA 92101. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at 619-533-6301.

DRAFT
CARMEL MOUNTAIN PRESERVE AND DEL MAR
MESA PRESERVE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Prepared for

CITY OF SAN DIEGO
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Chapter One

Introduction

A. Purpose of the Plan

This plan has been prepared to provide guidelines for the protection and maintenance of preserved natural open space on the Carmel Mountain Preserve and the Del Mar Mesa Preserve (Preserves) (Figures 1-1 and 1-2). The natural open space of the Preserves harbors extremely sensitive and depleted plant communities and species unique to the region. Vernal pools and the associated federally and state listed flora and fauna; southern maritime chaparral; short-leaved dudleya (*Dudleya blochmaniae* ssp. *brevifolia*); and the continuity of habitat for wildlife movement and gene flow are the primary resources identified for protection on these Preserves. The Preserves also act to protect the quality of life for residents of San Diego County and the quality of the experience for visitors by adding to the feeling of openness and interaction with nature that San Diego projects.

The City of San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) provides a framework for preserving and protecting natural resources in the San Diego region. The City of San Diego prepared a Subarea Plan under the MSCP to meet the requirements of the California Natural Communities Conservation Planning (NCCP) Act of 1992. The Carmel Mountain Preserve and Del Mar Mesa Preserve Management Plan describes the tasks which will allow the City to manage and maintain

the Preserves in accordance with the MSCP and the Subarea Plan. Specifically how the Management Plan adheres to the MSCP is described in Chapter 2.

B. Issues

A Public Scoping Meeting was held by the City of San Diego on February 27, 2001 to hear the issues of concern by agencies, jurisdictions, and public stakeholders. At the meeting, City staff described the intention of preparing a management plan for the Carmel Mountain and Del Mar Mesa Preserves and each person in attendance identified the issues they thought should be addressed in the plan.

A list of attendees and issues introduced was prepared by the City (Appendix 1). The Management Plan addresses these issues and others identified after the scoping meeting. Issues introduced fall into these categories:

- Multiple jurisdictions having different requirements
- Habitat restoration
- Open space protection enforcement
- Trails and access
- Natural resource protection
- Cultural resource protection
- Allowable recreational uses
- Private property access
- Format of the plan
- Funding for implementing the plan
- Fire management
- Education program
- Interim planning
- Management monitoring
- Adjacent development and other edge effects

- Threats to the natural and cultural resources
- Volunteer involvement
- Park design
- Public use
- Urban encroachment
- Easements
- Erosion and sedimentation
- Brush management
- Miscellaneous

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-  Carmel Mountain Preserve
-  Del Mar Mesa Preserve



FIGURE 1-1
Regional Location of the Preserves



Image Source: 2001 AirPhotoUSA (flown January 2001)



-  Carmel Mountain Preserve
-  Del Mar Mesa Preserve



FIGURE 1-2
Vicinity of the Preserves

Owners and their Requirements

Chapter Two

Carmel Mountain is owned by the City of San Diego with two private inholdings. Public ownership of Del Mar Mesa is split among five public or non-profit land owners/managers. Each of these entities has mandates that direct their management of open space preserves (Figures 2-1 and 2-2). In the past, parcels used for mitigation on Del Mar Mesa Preserve have been included on Figure 2-2.

The City of San Diego Subarea Plan of the Multiple Species Conservation Program states that, if possible, the Del Mar Mesa area should be managed as a single unit rather than split into separate entities according to ownership (County, various City departments, easements).

A. City of San Diego

The City of San Diego owns 300 acres of the Carmel Mountain Preserve and 234 acres of the Del Mar Mesa Preserve.

The City of San Diego Subarea Plan of the MSCP is designed to identify lands that would conserve habitat for federal and state endangered, threatened, or sensitive species. Also included in the MSCP are implementation strategies, preserve design, and management guidelines. The City of San Diego prepared a subarea plan to guide implementation of the MSCP Plan within its corporate boundaries. The City of San Diego adopted its MSCP Subarea Plan in March 1997.

The assessment of the sensitivity of plant communities and species follows the guidelines presented in the MSCP and the City's Biological Review References, such as the Significance Determination Guidelines Under the California

Environmental Quality Act dated November 2000 and the Land Development Code, Biology Guidelines dated June 6, 2000. The MHPA lands are those that have been included within the City's MSCP Subarea Plan for habitat conservation. These lands have been determined to provide the necessary habitat quality, quantity, and connectivity to sustain the unique biodiversity of the San Diego region. The MHPA lands are considered by the City to be sensitive biological resources.

Under the MSCP and the City's Land Development Code, Biology Guidelines (2000a), upland plant communities have been divided into four tiers.

A total of 85 sensitive plant and wildlife species are considered to be adequately protected within MHPA lands. These sensitive species are MSCP covered species and are included in the Incidental Take Authorization issued to the City by federal and state governments as part of the City's MSCP Subarea Plan Implementing Agreement.

There are 14 plants that are considered "narrow endemic species" based on their limited distributions in the region. These narrow endemics are sensitive biological resources. All 14 narrow endemic plants are also MSCP covered species and some are state or federally listed as threatened or endangered species. The City's requirements for land management on Del Mar Mesa and Carmel Mountain Preserves under the MSCP, are given in Appendix 2.

B. County of San Diego

The County of San Diego owns 26 acres on Del Mar Mesa Preserve. County of San

Diego lands are managed and maintained according to the City of San Diego Subarea Plan.

C. California Department of Fish and Game

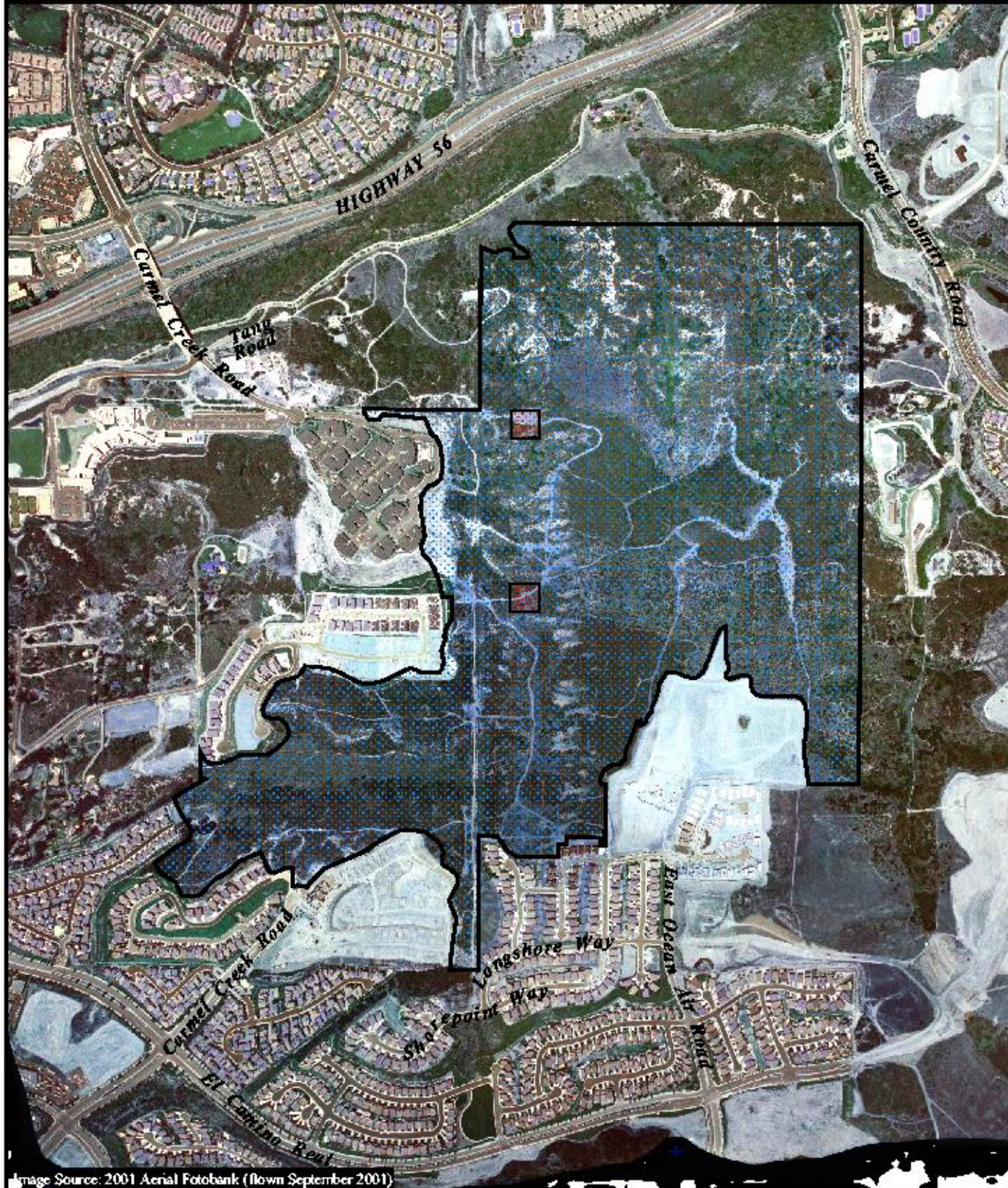
The California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) owns 81 acres of land on Del Mar Mesa. In the fall of 1986, Caltrans established a vernal pool preserve of 40 artificial pools and additional natural pools, on the CDFG portion of Del Mar Mesa to mitigate for the loss of San Diego Mesa mint from the Highway 52 extension and Interstate 15 construction (Black and Zedler 1996).

D. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service- San Diego National Wildlife Refuge Complex

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), San Diego National Wildlife Refuge (SDNWR) owns 56 acres within the Del Mar Mesa Preserve.

The National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 was derived from sections 4 and 5 of Public Law [P.L.] 89-669 (October 15, 1966; 80 Stat. 927) constitutes an “organic act” for the refuge system. It was amended by P.L. 105-57, “The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997.” The new law amends and builds upon the act of 1966 to ensure that the National Wildlife Refuge System is managed as a national system of related lands, waters, and interests for the protection and conservation of the nation’s wildlife resources.

The 1997 amendment gives guidance to the Secretary of the Interior for the overall management of the Refuge System. The Act’s main components include:



Carmel Mountain Preserve

Ownership

 Private


 City of San Diego

FIGURE 2-1

**Ownership on
Carmel Mountain Preserve**



Image Source: 2001 Aerial Photobank (Down September 2001)



- a strong and singular wildlife conservation mission for the Refuge System;
- a requirement that the Secretary of the Interior maintain integrity, diversity, and environmental health of the Refuge System;
- a new process for determining compatible uses of refuges;
- a recognition that wildlife-dependent recreational uses involving hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation, when determined to be compatible are legitimate and appropriate public uses of the Refuge System;
- that these compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses are the priority general public uses of the Refuge System; and
- a requirements for preparing comprehensive conservation plans.

The USFWS has established that the mission of the Refuge System is “to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.”

They have also established goals of the Refuge System which are:

- 1) To preserve, restore, and enhance in their natural ecosystems (when practicable) all species of animals and plants that are endangered or threatened with becoming extinct;
- 2) To perpetuate the migratory bird resource;
- 3) To preserve a natural diversity and abundance of fauna and flora on refuge lands; and
- 4) To provide an understanding and appreciation of fish and wildlife ecology and man’s role in his environment and to provide refuge visitors with high-quality, safe, wholesome, and enjoyable recreational experiences oriented toward wildlife to the extent these activities are compatible with the purposes for which

the refuge was established. Any specific management requirements must be managed in coordination with the Refuge System. If there is a conflict with the Refuge System regulations, those regulations of the Refuge must be implemented.

E. The Environmental Trust

The Environmental Trust (TET) owns 33 acres on Del Mar Mesa. The Environmental Trust exists to protect and preserve natural resources for future generations by acquiring land, establishing land banks, and facilitating the monitoring and management of lands identified and set aside by individuals, agencies, and developers for protection. Working with local governmental agencies, planners, and concerned land owners, the TET can facilitate the development of land bank systems, mitigation plans, and management of properties to be set aside as preserves or open space.

The Environmental Trust has a Management and Monitoring Plan for the Del Mar Mesa (Burke, pers. com. 2002), which provides guidelines for maintenance and protection of the biological resources on the site. The goal of the plan is to protect and maintain in perpetuity, the intact habitat occurring on the site and to provide remedial measures, if needed, to maintain the quality of the habitat in the future. Vegetation mapping by EcoVentures California (1999) has been incorporated into the overall vegetation map presented in the this Carmel Mountain Preserve and Del Mar Mesa Preserve Management Plan.

According to TET’s plan, management of their 33-acre preserve is passive and entails patrolling the area for trespassers, removing trash, and initiating an education program for the public to assist the TET in preserving and protecting the site. Maintenance activities are kept to a minimum unless a situation arises that requires intervention. Maintenance inspections occur quarterly with monitoring inspections which result in

annual reports prepared by June 1 of each year (for the previous year's monitoring). The reports are maintained in the permanent files of TET and available to any agency that requires them.

TET coordinates the management of their preserve with other regional agencies and operates in concert with the MSCP, NCCP, and other planning programs.

Management recommendations presented in this Carmel Mountain Preserve and Del Mar Mesa Preserve Management Plan are in accord with those of TET.

Access to private property on Del Mar Mesa can be obtained through existing SDG&E access roads (see Figure 5-2 in Chapter 5, Trails). Any restoration along or within private property access will not be conducted until the land is conserved or will be limited so it does not interfere with the private landowners' access rights. Additional environmental review will be required for access and development of private lands on Del Mar Mesa.

F. Private Land-owners

There are two acres of privately owned land currently on Carmel Mountain and 488 acres of privately owned land (includes 33 acres owned by TET) within Del Mar Mesa. Any privately owned lands within Carmel Mountain and Del Mar Mesa are not included within the preserves until such time as the land is conserved in perpetuity by the land owner or acquired by a public or non-profit agency for the purposes of conservation. **Any trails, restoration, or other activities depicted in this plan will not be implemented until the land is conserved or written permission is obtained from the landowner.**

Legal access to privately owned lands on Carmel Mountain and Del Mar Mesa must be maintained until the land is conserved or a written statement is received from the landowner stating that legal access to their property is no longer required.

Potential access for private property owners on Carmel Mountain can be provided through a gate on the western side of the future park site located south of the preserve (see Figure 5-1 in Chapter 5, Trails). The future design of the park shall ensure that legal access to private property owners on Carmel Mountain is not prevented. A key to the gate will be provided to private property owners when development is proposed. Additional environmental review will be required for access and development of private lands on Carmel Mountain.

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